

Kentucky Teacher



February 2004

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov

Teacher quality initiatives available on new Web site

By Joe Price

Council on Postsecondary Education

A new online resource from the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) summarizes and offers a list of electronic links to Kentucky college and university programs aimed at educating, certifying and retaining outstanding K-12 educators. The list is available at www.cpe.ky.gov/going2/tqi/ on the Web.

Educators will find applica-

ble — and often overlooked — higher education resources on a variety of related topics, according to James Applegate, vice president for academic affairs with the council.

Visitors to the Web site will find links to these academic programs:

Working relationships

Several programs at institutions around the state are specifically designed to energize relationships among faculty

members and administrators at public schools and the universities.

In Murray State University's Faculty Scholars program, faculty content specialists work in laboratories, workshops and classrooms with teachers, offering job-embedded professional development.

A fellowship program called Professors in the Schools, offered at Morehead State University, pairs faculty members with

school teachers for a minimum of 45 classroom contact hours.

Pikeville College and teachers at nearby public schools work together for reciprocal benefits. College students and faculty members offer workshops and seminars for teachers and help elementary and secondary students get ready for year-end assessments, and public school teachers instruct college classes and help preservice education students master both content

and teaching methods.

Alternative routes to certification

This national hot topic concentrates on mid-career professionals and recent college graduates who have strong content knowledge in fields other than education.

Programs in Kentucky include three at Western Kentucky University (WKU) focused on classroom teachers, learning and behavior disorder (LBD) teach-

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2004 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Patti Rowland helps Hogsett Elementary student Jennifer Barradas complete a report on the computer. Rowland is a curriculum and technology resource teacher.

Patti Rowland named 2004 Teacher of the Year

By Lisa Gross

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Patti Rowland, a curriculum and technology integration teacher at Danville Independent's Hogsett Elementary, is the 2004 Kentucky Teacher of the Year. Brenda Owen, a family and consumer science teacher at Morton Middle in Fayette County, is the 2004 Middle School Teacher of the Year. Jennifer Forgy, an English teacher at Paul Laurence Dunbar High in Fayette County, is the 2004 High School Teacher of the Year.

The three join 19 other teachers from across the state honored with 2004 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards. As the overall Teacher of the Year, Rowland

received a \$10,000 award from Ashland Inc. and will represent Kentucky in the 2004 National Teacher of the Year competition. Owen and Forgy each received \$2,000. The remaining 19 teachers received \$500 each.

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit will provide a sabbatical or suitable alternative to the Kentucky Teacher of the Year, beginning sometime in 2004.

Rowland has taught for 27 years, five at her current posi-

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KENTUCKY TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE

Something for everyone at this year's KTLC

The 26th Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference opens March 4 at Louisville's International Convention Center. The three-day event offers an impressive program of ticketed workshops, featured presenters and hundreds of concurrent sessions all focusing on enhancing student learning and improving instruction in Kentucky schools.

As in past years, KTLC offers something for everyone and every level of expertise. The conference provides "Pathways to Proficiency" for content teachers and library media specialists, for the technology novice and the expert. Kentucky educators will lead many of the workshops and sessions, sharing strategies, units of study and content programs they've used suc-

cessfully in their own schools.

Most of the professional development opportunities at the conference will put participants to work learning new skills through hands-on activities.

Featured presenters

Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit will be the keynote speaker
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Bulletin Board



Events

Seussentennial

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss! Dr. Seuss's 100th birthday is March 2. Schools around the country again will make his birthday a community reading celebration as part of the National Education Association's Read Across America program.
www.seussville.com/seussentennial and www.nea.org/readacross

2004 High School Foreign Language Festivals

March 5 Third District (Western Kentucky University)
March 15, 16 Fourth District (Elizabethtown Community College)
March 19, 20 Jefferson County Middle and High Schools (University of Louisville)
March 20 Central Kentucky (Transylvania University)
March 20 Northern Kentucky (Northern Kentucky University)
March 25 First District (Murray State University)
April 14 Eastern Kentucky University Foreign Language Festival
April 29 Fayette County High, Middle and Elementary Schools (Tates Creek High School)
May 15 2004 State Festival (University of Kentucky)
www.kctfl.org/festival/regional.html

Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Know a great K-6 mathematics or science teacher? Nominate him or her to receive presidential recognition. The National Science Foundation is looking for outstanding K-6 mathematics or science teachers for the 2004 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The awards are sponsored by the White House and administered by the National Science Foundation. State-level winners in each content area receive a \$10,000 award and a paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. Anyone can nominate a K-6 teacher. Nominated teachers must submit completed application materials by May 3.
Contact: Kentucky Department of Education mathematics consultant Ann Bartosh or science consultant Jackie Hensley at (502) 564-2106, or by e-mail at abartosh@kde.state.ky.us or jhensley@kde.state.ky.us
www.nsf.gov/pa

Lessons in dance

The Dance Theatre of Harlem will hold a student performance and lecture Feb. 20 at 10:30 a.m. at the Kentucky Center in Louisville. Group discounts are available by calling (502) 562-0196.
www.kentuckycenter.org/education/harlem.asp

Conferences

School Readiness

"Children: Our Common Wealth VI" will be held at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, Covington, April 16-17.
This conference, sponsored in part by Northern Kentucky University, will bring together some of the nation's leading researchers, theorists and educators on school readiness.
www.childreninc.org or call (859) 431-2075

Gang Prevention

Want to learn more about gangs and their influence on youth and their schools? "Promising Practices for School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention" will be held at the Hilton Netherlands Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio, March 9-10.
Contact: Becky Ritchey at EKUTTC@aol.com, (859) 626-1346
www.vpp.eku.edu/ for registration

Resources

Holocaust Teaching Materials

The U.S. Holocaust Museum offers teachers an online workshop, teaching guide, chronology, personal histories, lessons and other publications for teaching about the Holocaust. Online learning activities and resources are provided for students, families and adults.
www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/

Explore Mars

Images and updates on Mars rovers Spirit and Opportunity are available on the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration's Web site. Videos and text depict the challenges of getting to Mars, testing the rovers on Martian terrain, launching the rovers, navigating their flights, bringing them into the Martian atmosphere, landing them and getting them out of the lander cocoon.
<http://marsrovers.jpl.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

Grants and funding

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse offers information on educational funding opportunities. The site provides links to a wealth of resources to help locate and apply for educational funds from cor-

Humanities PD

The National Endowment for the Humanities is accepting applications for its summer seminars and institutes across the country. Programs for K-12 educators last from 4-6 weeks. Participants are paid stipends ranging from \$2,800-\$3,700 per person. Deadline for applications is March 1. To view a listing of seminars and institutes, visit www.neh.fed.us/projects/si-school.html. To receive an application, e-mail seminst@neh.gov or call (202) 606-8463.

4-H camps

Kentucky 4-H is looking for adults to manage four coed residential 4-H camps this summer. Youngsters ages 9 through 14 will attend the weeklong camps at Carlisle, London, Dawson Springs and Jabez. Camps open May 31. Three camps close July 31, and one remains open until Aug. 6. Camp managers are responsible for supervising paid and volunteer staff, as well as administrative duties and camp management. Starting salary is \$1,200 a month. Managers receive private living quarters, meals and use of a vehicle during the camp week. Managers must attend two training sessions April 30 - May 2 and May 23-26.
Contact: Donna Fox, (859) 257-5961, dfox@uky.edu
www.ca.uky.edu/agcollege/4h/camp/forms.htm for application

Diversity

The third annual Diversity Conference will be held Feb. 10-12 at the Perkins Conference Center on the Eastern Kentucky University campus. The conference explores teaching diverse learners and showcases public schools with success stories.
Contact: Tom Bonny or Amy Abney, (859) 622-6505, Tom.Bonny@eku.edu

porations, agencies and foundations.
<http://enc.org/professional/funding/>

New e-newsletter available

The Teacher Leaders Network (TLN), a project of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, is producing a free e-newsletter with a leadership focus. The biweekly e-Source includes links to new research and important reports. It also includes resources on mentoring and instructional practices.
www.teacherleaders.org/newsletter.html

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr
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Commissioner's Comments

Interactive Web site could help teachers design standards-based, student-centered classrooms

By Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
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Debb is a 5th-grade mathematics teacher somewhere in Kentucky. She wonders if her vision of proficiency for students is aligned with what is considered proficient in other 5th-grade Kentucky classrooms.

To find the answer, she logs onto the Kentucky Department of Education Web site and a few clicks of the mouse later is looking at student work posted by other Kentucky teachers. After seeing what other 5th-graders are doing, she enters an online forum to discuss the student work with other mathematics teachers.

When questions arise about her students, she scans samples of their work and posts them on the Web site. Other teachers in the forum look at the samples and make comments.

In another classroom in Kentucky, Frank also is looking for help. He knows he should be providing more standards-based units of study in his high school American history class, but he doesn't know where to begin.

Frank logs onto the department's Web site and clicks on the "Units of Study" page. He is welcomed to the site and asked to take a quick two-minute survey that will help determine where on the site he needs to begin.

Within a few minutes, Frank is looking at several model units used by other Kentucky high school teachers. He also finds a link to a place where he can build his own unit of study that incorporates history standards and strategies for adjusting his instruction to his students' learning needs. There's even a bulletin board link where he can post questions to other history teachers.

Do the experiences of these two imaginary Kentucky teachers sound too futuristic to be true? For now, they are.

However, we in the department have created such an interactive Web site on paper. We hope this comprehensive online system will become a reality for all Kentucky educators to use in designing their classroom instruction.

The idea for this interactive Web site is a result of conversations I've had with teachers across the state. Teachers say they want resources on curriculum mapping with standards-based units of study that are anchored in the curriculum maps. They say they want assessment items tied to those units of study. The design of this online system provides just that.

The need for providing help in developing standards-based lessons and units is underscored by staff observations in public schools over the past four years — doing

scholastic audits and reviews, providing professional development and helping schools improve instruction and learning. We've learned that successful schools share many common traits, among which are standards-based instruction and student-centered classrooms.

While still in the planning stages, this proposed addition to our Web site would provide educators with an interactive workspace that brings to life the key components to instructional improvement that successful schools already use. By organizing resources and information in this workspace, the department could provide better "just-in-time" instructional assistance to teachers.

Teachers wouldn't have to spend valuable time tracking down instructional resources. The Program of Studies, core content documents, academic expectations and other vital instructional planning resources would be just a mouse click away. And, these resources would be available 24/7, whenever teachers needed them.

Additionally, teachers would find excellent model instructional units tied to Kentucky standards and core content. We know there are many units of study being used in successful Kentucky schools that allow students to take responsibility for their learning, and we'd like to make them readily available to any teacher who wants them.

Teachers also would be able to access early diagnostic tools and interventions for a variety of student needs. These tools would enable teachers to learn more about student strengths and weaknesses, and help educators target their instruction for each individual student.

A very important component of the site would provide teachers with snapshot assessments and diagnostics to allow for regular checks of what skills and concepts students are learning. Banks of open-response and multiple-choice questions developed by Kentucky teachers would be available. More regular CATS-like classroom assessments can only strengthen students' critical-thinking skills.

This system will not be developed overnight. It will take more planning and gathering of information, and a lot of implementation before it does become reality. However, I am optimistic that with assistance from schools and districts in building the content, we can put a few parts of the comprehensive system online soon.

What I need to know before we move forward on this project is if this is a resource Kentucky teachers and administrators want and will use. I'd like to know how you

think you would use a Web site like this to improve teaching and learning in your classroom and your school. Would you be interested in participating in a statewide collegial learning community via the online forums? Do you want access to curriculum maps, units of study and lessons teachers in successful schools are using? Does the idea of having all of Kentucky's education documents centrally located online appeal to you? Would you allow us to post some of your students' work or your lesson plans and units of study on the Web site?

In the next few weeks, we will be posting an online survey on the department's Web site to give you a quick way to respond to these questions. We will post a direct link to the survey from the homepage, and I'll also send an e-mail notice to superintendents advising them that the survey is available.

I look forward to hearing from you on this topic in the coming weeks. You can contact me by e-mail at gwilhoit@kde.

state.ky.us.

As I close this month's column, it occurs to me that readers may expect a mention about the status of state funding for public schools. It's just too early in the 2004 General Assembly to know what the budget outlook will be. We really must wait for the completion of the legislative session in April to get a true picture of education funding for the coming two years.

You can be assured, however, that the Kentucky Board of Education, Department of Education staff and I are working diligently with the governor's budget office and key legislators in the House and Senate to assure support for the work you are doing in our schools.

It truly is everyone's goal to make certain every Kentucky child gets a world-class education that will prepare him or her for productive citizenship in the 21st century workplace.

Thank you for what you are doing in our schools to accomplish that goal!



Photo by Rick McComb

Learning to read, reading to learn

Cheyenne Ramos reads a book during class at Wright Elementary in Shelby County. Kentucky's emphasis on literacy skills is helping students improve their reading abilities. All grade levels of Kentucky students taking the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) perform above the national average. Elementary schools have made the largest gains on the CTBS, moving from the 49th percentile in 1997 to the 62nd percentile in 2003.

Meyzeek Middle School student investors make gains in stock market game and life skills

By Joy Barr
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When Meyzeek Middle School teachers Wendy Nord and Kim Muncy first told their mathematics classes that they were going to learn about the stock market together, many of the 6th-grade students were skeptical. How were they going to learn about investing in stocks if the teachers admitted they knew very little about the subject?

But by working and learning together, the classmates and teachers developed the business skills they needed to build profitable stock portfolios as part of the Stock Market Game™, a simulation game developed by the Kentucky Council on Economic Education.

What the students learned from the stock market study is illustrated by the success of one of the Meyzeek investment teams. Six girls worked as a team to put together the top stock portfolio among Kentucky schools in the Stock Market Game.

According to Susan Sandage, vice president of the Kentucky Council on Economic Education, the Stock Market Game is an educational Internet simulation for students in grades 4-12. Game activities can be integrated into math-

"This simulation game is especially helpful to at-risk students who are isolated by poverty or geography."

Kim Muncy, 6th grade teacher
Meyzeek Middle School

ematics, language arts, social studies, practical living, marketing and technology.

The game allows students up to 15 weeks to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in common stocks. Students form investment teams, pay a small entry fee with their faux money and work cooperatively to research companies online. They then select profitable stocks, buy and sell through the online simulation, and make ongoing decisions about their portfolios. Teachers have access to online educational resources, tutorials and lessons aligned to Kentucky standards to use in the classroom.

For these Jefferson County 6th graders, a mathematics exercise turned into the adventure of their short lifetimes. Muncy and Nord used the lesson plans provided by the online game and began

teaching their students an understanding of the stock market, costs and benefits of economic decision making and related concepts. Soon the students were buying and selling like veterans on Wall Street.

Six students, Anna Taylor, Donnique Spearman, Tamarra Ingram, Geresee Crook, Late Smith and Jaymica Harris, formed an investment team called the "Doughmakers." Together they researched companies and stock data from the Meyzeek computer lab. They purchased stock from companies whose names they were familiar with, such as Gucci, Tommy Hilfiger and Timberland.

"This simulation game is especially helpful to at-risk students who are isolated by poverty or geography," said Muncy. Meyzeek is a part magnet and part comprehensive (neighborhood)

school in Kentucky's largest school district. Most of the students were unfamiliar with the stock market and investing before they began their study, but quickly learned about the business world.

The students only got to use the computer lab every other week, so they used the financial pages in The Courier-Journal to track their stock portfolios each day.

They learned to research stocks and invest on the three major stock exchanges. Along the way, they learned life skills such as building personal wealth, decision making in a team environment, laws of supply and demand, profit and loss, and how world events influence the value of their investments, their teachers pointed out.

After 15 weeks, the Doughmakers increased their faux portfolio by 60 percent. Muncy gave them the news that they had won a statewide competition, beating out 761 school teams that played the Stock Market Game.

After winning the competition, the students were honored at a statewide luncheon in Louisville. Nord and Muncy assisted the girls with appropriate clothing and etiquette. Community donations provided new "business attire" for each girl, and a local restaurant provided a luncheon-etiquette lesson before the big event.

"The Stock Market Game gave our students an opportunity to engage in real-world applications of learning — both in and out of school. The fact that our winning students did not come from the mainstream social capital shows the diversity of talents and capacities hidden beneath test scores and other measures of schools," said Keith Look, principal at Meyzeek.

"In the right relationship between teacher, student, and content, all children can excel to the highest of levels. That is the job of schools — to work tirelessly until the connection is made," he added. "As a principal I'm lucky to have Ms. Muncy and Ms. Nord, and other teachers like them, who are willing to give students rich, rigorous educational experiences that give every child a chance to find success."

Contact: Kim Muncy, kmuncy1@jefferson.k12.ky.us or Wendy Nord, wnord1@jefferson.k12.ky.us

Both may be reached by telephone at (502) 485-8299.

Registration closes Feb. 12 for the spring competition in the Stock Market Game program and the new Take Stock in Kentucky program. To register your class or to find out more about these programs, visit the Kentucky Council on Economic Education's Web site www.econ.org, or call Susan Sandage toll free at (800) 436-3266.



Members of the award-winning Doughmakers investment team, Anna Taylor, left, and Tamarra Ingram, do online research about companies for their investment portfolio in the Stock Market Game.

Photo by Rick McComb

Kentucky gets 189 new nationally certified teachers

One hundred eighty-nine Kentucky teachers achieved certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards in 2003. Kentucky now has a total of 537 National Board Certified Teachers working in schools across the state. The state's goal is to have at least one National Board Certified Teacher in every public school by 2020.

The Kentucky General Assembly provides incentives to encourage experienced teachers to pursue national certification. Teachers who achieve national certification receive a \$2,000 annual salary increase.

Kentucky placed 10th among states in the number of teachers who received national certification during 2003.

"Attracting and retaining competent and talented teachers is the most important ingredient in providing a sound education for all our children," said Kentucky Commissioner of Education Gene Wilhoit. "National Board Certification has provided a way for Kentucky policy makers to recognize and provide additional compensation to those teachers who meet these rigorous standards. Those who attain National Board Certification are strengthening the teaching profession in the commonwealth and across the country."

Teachers generally spend a minimum of 300 hours completing the certification process while continuing to teach full-time. They are evaluated on content knowledge, effectiveness in teaching, and ability to manage and measure student learning.

Visit www.nbpts.org for more information about certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. The Web site also offers a directory of all new and prior national certified teachers.

Kentucky makes plans to commemorate Brown v. Board of Education decision

On May 17, 1954, in the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*, the U.S. Supreme Court ended federally sanctioned racial segregation in public schools by ruling unanimously that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." A groundbreaking case, *Brown* overturned the precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which had declared "separate but equal facilities" constitutional. The 1954 decision also provided the legal foundation of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Although widely perceived as a revolutionary decision, *Brown* was actually the culmination of changes both in the court and in the strategies of integration's most powerful legal champion, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). This court decision

still has implication on school districts in 2004.

May 17 marks the 50th anniversary of the high court's decision. In coming months, the Kentucky Department of Education will co-sponsor a number of activities that celebrate, acknowledge and reflect the impact of *Brown v. Board*:

- "Brown v. Board of Education Turns Fifty: But Are We Still Separate and Not Equal?" – Feb. 26, Eastern Kentucky University, Perkins Building

This conference is planned as a starting point to discuss developments in racial issues, primarily with regard to education, since the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Roger Cleveland, director of the Division of Equity and Federal Programs in the Kentucky Department of Education, will serve as a pan-

elist for the discussion, and the division will collaborate on the conference in general. The conference also may include a panel of teachers and/or administrators from schools participating in the Minority Student Achievement pilot program. Student members of high school Diversity Clubs will participate.

- The 31st Annual National Conference on the Black Family in America — March 11-13, "The Unfulfilled Promises of Brown v. Board of Education," University of Louisville, College of Education

Contact: Joseph McMillan; (502) 852-6656 or (502) 245-2272

On the Web: www.louisville.edu/edu/bfa

- Brown v. Board of Education Anniversary Symposium – March 30, Kentucky History

Center, Frankfort

Linda Brown Thompson and Cheryl Brown Henderson, the daughters of Brown plaintiff the Rev. Oliver Brown, will be keynote speakers at a symposium to examine the history and legacy of the landmark decision. Historians, educators and those with personal experiences to share will address the history of the court's decision, the desegregation of schools in Kentucky and the continuing challenges to educational equity.

This event is sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Oral History Commission. Contact: Kim Lady Smith, (502) 564-1792, ext. 4473, kim.smith@ky.gov

For more information about more statewide activities, contact Roger Cleveland, (502) 564-3791.

New high school courses meet graduation requirements

The Kentucky high school graduation requirements that became effective with the graduating class of 2002 allow interdisciplinary or applied courses to substitute for specific academic courses required for graduation. This option provides high schools with opportunities to offer courses that have the same academic rigor as traditional courses; however, the content is delivered through a more contextual, hands-on approach.

Staff in the Department of

Education's Division of Curriculum Development and Division of Career and Technical Education has designed several interdisciplinary courses that meet these new requirements. Any high school, career and technical center or area technology center is eligible to offer these interdisciplinary courses.

Professional development is being scheduled this summer for schools that plan to implement these courses. Curriculum is available for these interdis-

iplinary courses:

- Life Science component within the science requirement
 - Agribiology
 - Agriscience
 - Medical Science
 - Nutritional and Food Science
- Economics within the social studies requirement
 - Business Economics
 - Consumer Economics
- Geometry requirement
 - Construction Technology/Geometry

- Computer Aided Drafting
- Health
 - Health and Wellness
- Mathematics elective requirement
 - Math for Business and Industry

Additional information about these interdisciplinary courses and the curriculum is available on the department Web site. Go to www.education.ky.gov and enter the words "Interdisciplinary Courses" in the keyword/search box at the top of the page.

Literacy Web site gets redesign for 2004

Links to more than 1,500 resources that can help improve student literacy are now available at the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site. The "Literacy" homepage has been revised and updated to provide teachers with quick access to materials that will help students at all levels – elementary, middle and high – increase their literacy skills.

To reach the site, go to www.education.ky.gov and type "#Literacy" in the keyword/search box and click "Search."

The literacy homepage has links to Kentucky Reading First, a federal initiative to improve reading for primary students, as well as to guidelines for selecting and submitting Kentucky Core Content reading passages.

A link from the homepage to "More Reading Strategies in Action" offers more information about this CD-ROM-based professional development tool that was widely distributed to Kentucky middle and high schools last

fall. The Web site also offers technical help in using the disk and provides a user survey where teachers can submit questions they'd like answered.

Additionally, the redesigned instructional resource provides access to the nine elements of Comprehensive Schoolwide Literacy programs. These elements give teachers at every level the resources (printed material, available grants information, video clips of good instruction and ideas from Kentucky teachers) to enhance their schools' literacy programs through:

- aligning curriculum to literacy standards
- providing multiple assessments
- ensuring effective instruction and targeted intervention
- fostering partnerships with families and community groups
- creating a literate environment
- utilizing professional development
- building a literacy team

Pieces of the "literacy puzzle" come together on the Kentucky Department of Education's redesigned literacy Web site.



- maximizing resources
- developing a literacy plan

Teachers also can use the Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (PERKS) indicators to evaluate their schools' performance in each element.

Kentucky teachers who have work they would like to submit for the Web site or who want to suggest Web sites they have found useful in their literacy planning and work, should contact Rene Matthews, literacy consultant for the Department of Education, at rmatthew@kde.state.ky.us, (502) 564-2106.

Read & Discuss

‘Extreme Teaching’

Reviewed by Richard Hughes
Superintendent
Hardin County Schools

At the annual meeting of the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) last July, it was my good fortune to attend a three-hour session titled “Extreme Teaching” conducted by Keen Babbage. Babbage is a practicing teacher and assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County.

During the session, he not only taught the concept of *extreme teaching* but also demonstrated it for approximately 40 participants. Each attendee received a copy of his book, “Extreme Teaching,” at the session, but it was late August before I read it.

In September, I wrote Babbage and told him that I was going to order a copy of his book for each of our administrators and board members. I invited him to present the same three-hour session to them that he presented at KASA.

I wanted the Hardin County board and school administrators to hear Babbage because:

- I knew he has credibility as a practicing middle school teacher and administrator
- I had attended and benefited from his presentation at KASA
- I found his book to be research-based, particularly as it relates to the importance of using meaningful and challenging activities to connect what students know, are interested in and are good at with new content (knowledge) they need to learn.

I also thought that he did a superb job of reminding the KASA session participants — and the readers of his book — that we already know what works in order to teach effectively and that the purpose of teaching is to cause learning.

Babbage gets extraordinarily high marks for reminding educators that prior learning is not necessarily dependent upon finding places in the curriculum

where students have been *previously* and officially taught the topics. For example, mathematics teachers should be cognizant that though students may never have had a formal classroom lesson on fractions, they have used them. They know about

pizza and how it is sliced; that sporting events are divided into quarters or halves; and that a dollar can be broken down into quarters, tenths and halves.

Babbage emphasizes that in *extreme teaching* teachers can connect learning with the students’ real lives. He gives a lesson plan format of three columns. In Column A, he encourages teachers to list what students know, are interested in, and/or are good at that relates to the topic under consideration. In Column B, he suggests teachers state what it is students need to learn and know about the topic. In Column C, he asks teachers to list relevant, effective, meaningful and challenging activities that will cause learning by making connections between Column A and Column B.

Most of us are well versed in the concept of prior learning. Yet, Babbage encourages us to think deeply and to find and acknowledge students’ prior learning, which exists on most topics although it may — or may not — have come from a formal lesson in school. He gives creative examples that identify students’ prior learning and how it relates to new content to be learned, such as the example about fractions.

In his book, Babbage actually provides examples of lesson plans that pertain to such topics as fractions, paragraph writing, reading comprehension, supply and demand, multiplication, architecture, government,

mathematics word problems, graphs, energy, motion and focus, chronological order, comparing and contrasting, accepting responsibility, the scientific method and others.

Babbage reminds us that there are four essential and effective characteristics of great teachers:

- they challenge students, and they challenge themselves
- they use a variety of teaching methods with emphasis on active involvement of students
- they are enthusiastic and encouraging
- they connect learning with students’ lives now, in their real worlds

He concludes his book with *One Hundred Schools of Thought* — a list of 100 relevant statements regarding education today. The list includes assertions such as, “All classrooms and philosophies should be *results and no excuses*.”

Babbage does explain the term *extreme teaching* and provides us with enough data and information to enable us to do it. On that September day when I wrote to arrange his visit to Hardin County Schools, I concluded my remarks by saying, “I don’t know what our administrators will want to do with your work after becoming more familiar with it. What I do know is that my conscience would bother me if I did not familiarize them with it.”

Kentucky teachers and administrators also will benefit from his work!



By Keen Babbage

Paperback, 224 pages; Rowman & Littlefield; 2002; ISBN: 0810843498

Author Keen Babbage is a teacher and assistant principal at Bryan Station Middle School in Fayette County. He will be a featured presenter at the 2004 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC) March 4-6 in Louisville. He will discuss his book and show participants during a three-hour session how they can use extreme teaching methods in their classrooms. See story on Page 1 for more information about KTLC or visit www.kentuckytlc.org for online registration.



Photo by Rick McComb

Follow the bouncing ball

Sunshine Millay, a 7th-grade mathematics teacher at Owensboro Middle School, prepares to drop a basketball so that Jeff Zimmerman, a 7th-grade science teacher, can plot the motion of the falling object using a hand-held motion detector. The teachers are preparing for a collaborative study of energy and motion for their classes.

Students engage in real-world mathematics experiences

By Joy Barr

jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

"To teach is to touch a life forever." These eight words remind Sarah Lamb of the power she has to influence the lives of her students. Lamb, one of two 2003 state-level winners of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, says she is never satisfied with being just a "good teacher," and she continually strives to improve herself as an educator.

That's why students in Lamb's algebra and geometry classes at Owensboro Middle School learn much more than just the formulas for linear and exponential equations. They take a variety of equations and apply them to real-world applications. They discover that middle school mathematics is something they'll use in future jobs and in their personal lives as adults.

Lamb incorporates hands-on, interactive classes as often as possible with her students. She says this approach helps her reach many of her students who are visual, active learners.

An example of an interactive class might be a graphing aerobics activity where students physically model the graphs of various mathematics functions and the effects of different shifts. As the teacher, she can determine which students do not understand the material and then work one-on-one with the student, she said.

Lamb designs her mathematics classes around Kentucky's core content and national mathematics standards. "I search for materials that ensure concepts are being taught using the most effective techniques," said Lamb. "I make sure all materials address a specific concept or skills from the core content. I often create my own materials to



Sarah Lamb uses mathematics manipulatives to help Owensboro Middle School student Hannah Ison understand geometry concepts. The class is building an icosahedron, a 20-sided, three-dimensional figure, as a class project.

challenge students with CATS-like questions. I try to offer students experiences that challenge them to higher levels."

Lamb encourages students to be active participants in the learning process. She wants them to ask questions and contribute to class discussions.

One of her favorite teaching moments, she says, is when a student explains a different method for solving a problem. She also is pleased when a student provides insight to a mathematical concept or asks an intriguing question.

"Moments like these boost my spirits by reminding me that my students are learning, which makes all the research and planning worthwhile," stated Lamb.

Paula Roberts, principal at Owensboro Middle, says that Lamb has high expectations for all of her students. "She truly understands the positive impact of engaging students in a vari-

ety of learning experiences. Just recently, she began to integrate our wireless network lab into her geometry class to enhance student learning," said Roberts.

"Students transition easily from pre-algebra to advanced math courses because Lamb teaches each math lesson with the future in mind. She understands what terminology and techniques to teach students in middle school as a solid foundation for success in high school mathematics courses," stated Roberts.

"Having taught middle grades mathematics for several years, I realize that teaching entails

much more than just explaining material to students. It requires spending a great deal of time planning lessons and searching for activities that will enhance these lessons," Lamb said. "I also design my own worksheets, tests and quizzes so that I can assess the students at the level that they will be expected to perform on the CATS tests. Most importantly, I try to instill in all my students a feeling of success and a joy of learning. These are the important things that they will carry with them for a lifetime."

Although teaching mathematics to students is Lamb's primary goal, there are many other skills she wants her students to learn from her. Organization, self-confidence and test-taking skills can be applied to any subject on any level, she said.

"Work with other teachers here at Owensboro Middle strengthens and improves my teaching strategies," said Lamb. Each week, the mathematics teachers collaborate, sharing ideas and designing new lessons and assessments. They also meet with the science teachers to develop strategies for integrating the two subjects.

Lamb said she always wanted to be a teacher. Her desire to help students learn is what motivates her to tutor students after school. "This gives me great satisfaction, working with students on an individual basis. Since I tutor some of the students for two or three years, I get to know them personally. I rejoice with them in their successes and take pride in watching their mathematical abilities grow," said Lamb.

Community involvement, although not directly tied to a teacher's job responsibilities, is important in the role of a teacher, Lamb said. As an educator, she daily seeks to model for her students the characteristics of a responsible citizen and an all-around good person. "Students are much more likely to notice these characteristics if they see them put into practice both inside and outside of the classroom," Lamb stated.



Sarah Lamb

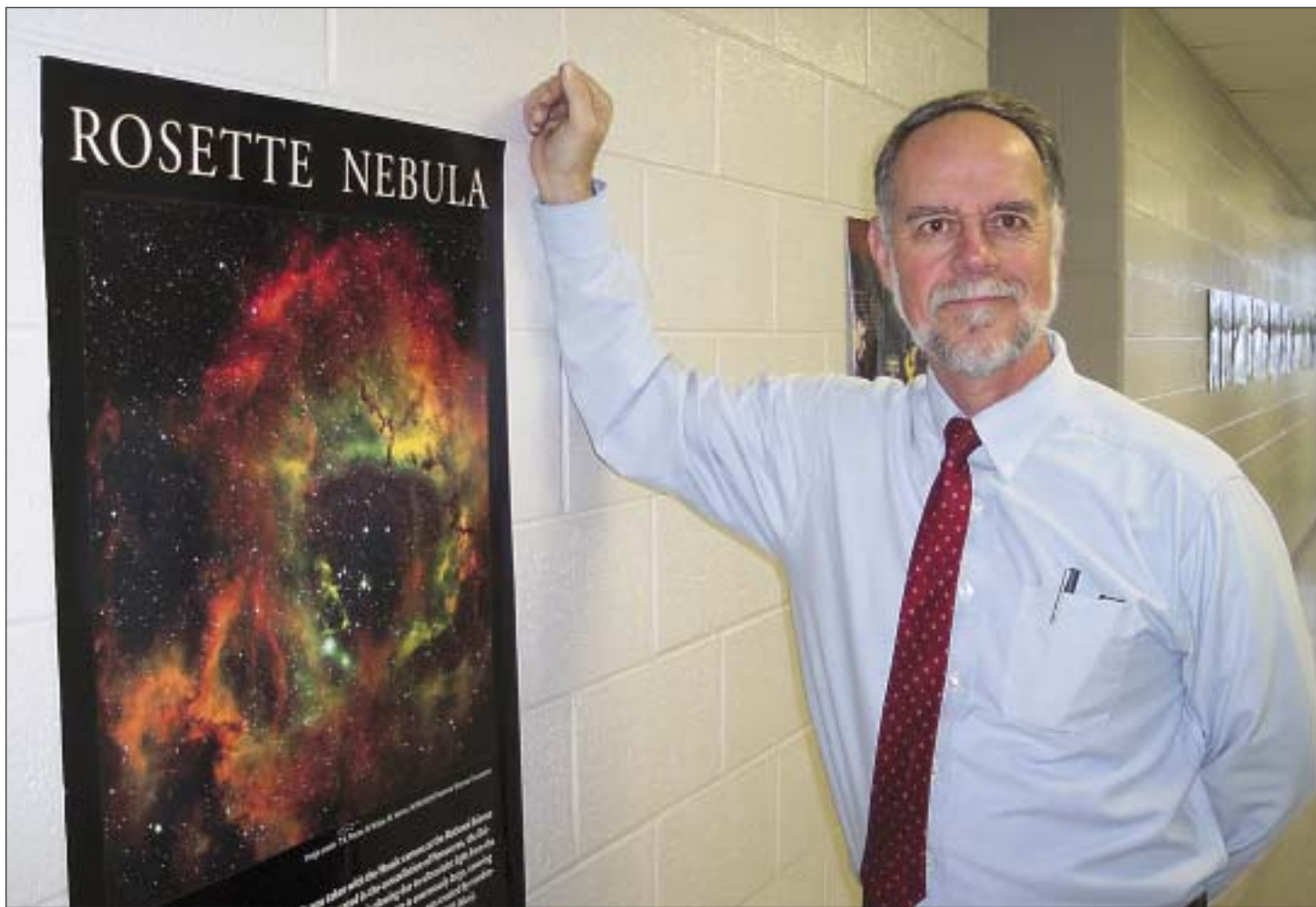
Bachelor of Science, Brescia University; Master of Science in Mathematics, Western Kentucky University

Owensboro Middle School teacher since 1996; teaches algebra, geometry and mathematics

Contact: Sarah Lamb, (270) 686-1130, slamb@owensboro.k12.ky.us

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the nation's highest commendation for K-12 science and mathematics teachers, recognizes a combination of sustained and exemplary work both in and outside the classroom. The program recognizes elementary and secondary teachers in alternating years. For information about nominating a K-6 science or mathematics teacher for the 2004 program, see Bulletin Board on Page 2.

Warren teacher and students boldly go where few science classes have gone before



Jim Myers feels he has found his calling as teacher of a research-based high school astronomy class that keeps him questioning and learning alongside his students.

By Don Sargent
Warren County Schools

Warren Central High School science teacher Jim Myers could be accused of having his head in the clouds, but it's more accurate to say his beard-encircled visage is somewhere in the nebulae. Myers has started an astronomy class at the Warren County school that has him and his students operating in an unfamiliar orbit that he hopes will boost learning to escape velocity.

The class, which grew out of Myers' participation last summer in the Teacher Leaders in Research-Based Science Education program, is a few light years removed from the traditional lecture-and-test structure. "It is a bit different," says Myers, "because what we're doing is authentic scientific research. Most of the time in science classes, the research is set up so that at least the teacher already knows what the answer is going to be. With this, the students are involved in cutting-edge research, and we really don't know what the results are going to be."

Sounds a bit nebulous, but Doug Jenkins, head of Warren Central's science department, says it fits perfectly with the school's goals. Jenkins, himself an innovator known for his laser light shows in physics class, explains: "All our science classes are designed to be hands-on, with an emphasis on teaching students the basic skills of science reasoning. Our new

astronomy class, with its research-based approach, gives seniors an opportunity to utilize and further develop those skills at a level above that of a normal high school science class."

The level is high enough that the students are doing research normally reserved for college students. Some of Myers' students, in fact, have worked with the Western Kentucky University (WKU) astronomy department on research projects.

When these high school students log on to the Internet to search for stars, they're not looking for the Snoop Dogg or Britney Spears variety. They use computers to tie in to high-powered telescopes and study variations in brightness and gravitational pull that can give them clues about the cosmos.

Such fact-finding missions, reasons WKU astronomy professor Richard Gelderman, are in line with educational goals set by Kentucky and the nation. "Science is not an encyclopedia of facts to be regurgitated on an exam," he explains. "It is a process used by humans to learn more about the natural world around us. Such experiences are the rationale behind the core content and Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, as well as the National Science Education Standards and Benchmarks for Science Literacy."

Gelderman has worked with some of the WCHS astronomy students, and he likes what he has seen. "Mr. Myers not

only accepted the challenge of creating a new astronomy course at Warren Central, he has taken the opportunity to develop a hands-on, project-based curriculum which truly matches the spirit of the core content and Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools," he says. "The project-based curriculum puts students in the role of learning how to ask and answer their own questions. The students (in Myers' class) don't just read some other investigator's conclusion about the universe. They actively participate in figuring it out for themselves."

Myers admits that some students are "a little bit uncomfortable" with the radical class structure. Others, however, embrace the research-based format.

"It's not like a normal class where you sit there and do one assignment and do homework over it," says Jason Busby, a WCHS senior. "It's group-based homework. Each person has a specific part to research, and then we put it all together in big projects."

Such a departure from the norm is not unexpected for Myers. At age 52, Myers is only in his fifth year as a teacher. He spent 25 years as a minister before taking classes to reactivate his teacher certification.

The move from the pulpit to the classroom, he says, is only a continuation of his life's work. "I found out that this (the classroom) is where I'm supposed to be," says Myers. "It's still a ministry, just a different type. I enjoy the interaction with students, both in the classroom and at ball games and other events. I can get to know them on a different level than I could as a minister."

A self-described "creationist," Myers enjoys exploring the mysteries of science above simply citing the hard facts. His desire to instill such an attitude in his students led Myers to apply for the Teacher Leaders in Research-Based Science Education program last year. One of only 18 teachers accepted, Myers completed a four-month online astronomy course before spending two weeks in July at the Kitt Peak National Observatory in Arizona.

That experience "completely revolutionized my way of teaching science," says Myers. "Rather than standing in front of the room and writing facts on the board, I do a lot more questioning of students. Often, when they ask me a question, I say, 'Let's find out together.' We devise an experiment or observation to come to a conclusion."

Myers himself has come to some conclusions that are surprisingly down-to-earth for someone with his eyes on the heavens. "I want my students to be independent thinkers," he says. "When you think about it, a lot of life is research-based. I want students to learn that thinking process so they can come to beneficial conclusions in their lives."

Contact: Jim Myers, (270) 842-7302, jmyers@warren.k12.ky.us.

(Don Sargent is the community relations specialist for Warren County Schools.)



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Frankfort, KY 40601

State board recognizes students need physical activity

Student health — from preschool through 12th grade — is an important issue for Kentucky educators. Many studies show a direct connection between risky health behaviors among young people and student performance in school. Healthy students have better school attendance, a more positive attitude toward school and better academic achievement.

In recognition of those facts, the Kentucky Board of Education passed a resolution at its December meeting emphasizing the importance of physical activity for students. Education Com-

missioner Gene Wilhoit sent an e-mail copy of the proclamation to superintendents, principals and teachers along with a message explaining the board's desire that, within the context of local decision making, schools find more time for P-12 students to be involved in physical activity on a daily basis.

The Department of Education is making available resources and models of best practices that will help classroom teachers integrate periods of physical activity into their everyday classroom practices.

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tion. At Hogsett Elementary, she is the school's technology coordinator, serves on the school and district technology committee and is the student technology leadership program coordinator. She also is a member of the school-based decision making council.

She attended Centre College and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education from the University of Louisville. Rowland also holds a Rank I certification in library science from Eastern Kentucky University.

She is a member of the Central Kentucky Association of Technology Coordinators; the Danville, Oldham County, Kentucky and National Education Associations; the International Society for Technology in Education; and the Kentucky School Media Association/Kentucky Library Association.

Rowland received an Excellence in Teaching Award from Campbellsville University in 2003; was named to "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" in 2002; and received an Ashland Inc. Golden Apple Award in 1993.

Middle School Teacher of the Year

Brenda Owen has 27 years of teaching experience, with 14 at her current position.

She earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree in education and her Rank I certification from Eastern Kentucky University.

She is a member of the Kentucky Association of Vocational Home Economics Teachers; the Kentucky Chapter of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences; the Fayette County, Kentucky and National Education Associations; the Association for Career and Technical Education; Phi Upsilon Omicron; and Phi Delta Kappa. Owen won an Excellence in Teaching Award from Campbellsville University in 2003; was the Fayette County Middle School



Owen

Teacher of the Year in 2002, and received the Impact II — The Teachers' Network Award in 1998.

She also is an advisor to the Future Homemakers of America; serves on the Fayette County Supplemental Pay Committee; is a site-based council member; and is a member of The Pew Network for Standards-Based Reform.

High School Teacher of the Year

Jennifer Forgy has 11 years of teaching experience, with two at her current position. She earned a bachelor's degree in English from Whittier College in California, and a master's degree in secondary education with an English emphasis from Georgetown College. Forgy received her teaching certification from Eastern Kentucky University and has completed advanced placement studies at Duke University in cooperation with the College Board.

She is a member of the Kentucky and the National councils of Teachers of English. Forgy recently was invited to attend the International Education Summit; was nominated by students as a "Top Dawg" teacher five times during 2002-2003; was named to "Who's Who Among America's Teachers" in 1996 and 2002; and was nominated as Teacher of the Year



Forgy

at Montgomery County High School for 1993, 1994 and 1995. She also has served as the literary studies teacher, fine arts administrator and director of community relations at the Kentucky Governor's Scholars Program from 2001 to 2003.

This is the third year that Ashland Inc. and the Kentucky Department of Education have jointly sponsored the Kentucky Teacher of the Year and Teacher Achievement Awards. Ashland Inc. has recognized outstanding Kentucky teachers with its Teacher Achievement Awards since 1988 and has awarded nearly \$450,000 to nearly 200 P-12 teachers.

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ers, and administrators.

Murray State also offers an alternative LBD certification program for teachers already working in special education.

Recruitment

The "College Cadet" recruitment initiative at Morehead State introduces top high school students to the history, philosophy and rewards of the teaching profession. A partnership with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System allows high school students to earn three hours of transferable college credit for participating in mentoring, student teaching and related activities in the Morehead program.

Technology

A comprehensive WKU project called "e-train Express" seeks, among related

goals, to ensure that WKU education graduates can use technology to increase student achievement and assess learning.

WKU project organizers are working to set up a nationally accessible electronic clearinghouse of exemplary technology-assisted lesson plans and assessment tools.

Literacy-related programs

At WKU's Reading Academy, teachers and administrators develop literacy action plans and hold a "Share Fair" to convey information to colleagues, parents, board members and legislators.

Librarians at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) work with public school educators to help them learn about school issues and share information about local

and national support groups and professional opportunities, including a successful grant-writing component.

Statewide and national programs

EKU is home to several education programs with statewide or national goals.

The Center for Middle School Academic Achievement supports and recognizes middle-grades schools and teachers throughout the state, particularly with forums and symposia, grant writing, and publication of the "Kentucky Middle School Journal."

EKU is lead agent for the Commonwealth Consortium for Teacher Education Model Programs. This grant-funded program will be working through 2005 to create a statewide infrastructure for model programs, including technology,

program guidelines and recruitment activity.

Both the National Symposium on Educator Dispositions and the National Network for the Study of Educator Dispositions at EKU seek to identify and nurture people interested in the teaching profession.

In addition to these sample programs, Kentucky's colleges and universities offer summer institutes, resource collections and programs for superintendents and principals.

For more information, visit the new Web site at www.cpe.ky.gov/going2/tqi/ or contact Charlie Wade at the Council on Postsecondary Education at (502) 573-1555, charles.wade@mail.state.ky.us.

Local blood drive gives purpose to 4th-graders' work

By Cathy Lindsey
clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

Fourth-grade students at Kyrock Elementary recently realized the significance of writing for a purpose as they learned the valuable lesson of giving. Their persuasive letters to people in Edmonson County resulted in one of the community's most successful blood drives.

After studying blood and its benefit to life as part of their science class, the students wrote letters to family and friends encouraging them to participate in a blood drive at the school.

"We wanted the letter to be real world, so the students would have a passion when writing for a real purpose," said 4th-grade teacher Tina Tunks. Teachers decided the student-sponsored blood drive would be a good culminating event for the science study.

The letters were informative and convincing. Students included details they learned in science class to encourage donors, such as:

- Someone needs blood every three seconds
- A person can save up to three lives with each blood donation

The students were disappointed to discover during their studies that while 85 percent of the U.S. population is eligible to give blood, only 5 percent do, Tunks said. Some students used this statistic in their letters to convince their audiences that there is no good excuse not to donate blood.

Guest speakers visited the school and shared their experiences of how blood donations had

helped them at different times in their lives. "These specific stories helped the kids put a face on the importance of giving blood," said principal Mary Alice Cole.

The students created and hung posters throughout Edmonson County to promote the blood drive. Some students also appeared on the local TV news and radio programs.

The students generated so much interest about the blood drive that the Red Cross in Louisville brought extra beds and more staff on the day of the blood drive.

Businesses in the community also got involved in the student project. They donated door prizes that included a two-night stay in Gatlinburg, a \$100 gift card, free haircuts and three \$50 savings bonds.

The school also rewarded its students. Each student who convinced someone to donate blood received a free homework pass. The PTO bought prizes for all the writers.

On the day of the blood drive, every 4th-grader had the opportunity to register donors and escort them to the donation area in the gymnasium.

"We have a lot of first-time donors who wouldn't have come without the letters from the children," said parent Angie Miller, who is Edmonson County Blood Services Coordinator.

Kyrock principal Cole was not surprised at the response. "This is a good community school, and the community is always supportive of what the kids do," she said.



Jewelina Lindsey and teacher Tina Tunks conference on the 4th-grader's persuasive letter asking for community support of the student-sponsored blood drive at Kyrock Elementary.

Students and faculty were pleased with the turnout. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends came to donate.

At the end of the day, students tallied 81 pints of donated blood. That total doubled the average for a county blood drive and tied the county donation record that occurred shortly after Sept. 11, 2001.

"We are very proud of the students for getting so many people in here to give," Tunks said. "From this experience, the stu-

dents saw first-hand how they can make a difference."

The 4th-graders were excited about this opportunity to give back to their community. "If I was older, I would give blood," said 4th-grader Chelsea Kinser. A majority of the other students agreed.

"From this experience, a lot of these children will grow up to be regular donors," said 4th-grade teacher Tammy Poteet.

Principal Cole is hoping to make the student-sponsored blood drive an annual event.

"The most important lesson for these students is the significance of donating blood and seeing that there are people in the community who are willing to help out," she said. "We need to show them the value of caring about other people."

Fourth-grader Kelsea Wilson echoed that sentiment, "It takes somebody who cares to give the gift of life."

Contact: Tina Tunks at (502) 286-4013 or TTunks@Edmonson.k12.ky.us

'CATS & NCLB' airs on KET3 in February

"CATS & NCLB" is a new eight-minute video produced by the Kentucky Department of Education. The program is designed to help explain to teachers, parents and others interested in education in Kentucky about how the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) data will be used to meet federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

This program helps answer some of the most frequently asked questions and clears up misconceptions about CATS and NCLB. A second video will be released this spring to address specific school implementation issues.

The program first aired on KET3/Star Channel 703 in late January. It will be shown again twice on the Star Channel in February: Feb. 10 at 11:20 a.m. ET/10:20 a.m. CT and Feb. 13 at 10:50 a.m. ET/9:50 a.m. CT.

Schools may copy the program when it airs or purchase a copy for \$5 from the department. To order a copy, contact Melissa Terrell, Division of Media Services, mterrell@kde.state.ky.us, (502) 564-2000.

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the morning of March 5. Featured presenters during the conference will look at many issues of importance to educators in the state, including education equity, character education and literacy. Kentucky educators Keen Babbage and Janet Hurt will discuss teaching strategies they've written about. A review of Babbage's book, "Extreme Teaching," is on Page 6.

Who should attend?

KTLC is professional development designed for Kentucky educators and administrators. However, school council members, parents and other Kentuckians interested in education will find plenty to interest them. When five or more people from one school preregister for KTLC, the conference fee will be waived for a principal or assistant principal. This is a \$100 savings.

The Student Technology Lead-

ership Program Showcase will attract many students to the conference to see the latest in technology. School projects from across the state will be featured.

Many organizations also have chosen to meet in conjunction with KTLC so members can take advantage of conference workshops and sessions. Locations and times for these ancillary meetings can be found on the conference Web site.

Professional development and Effective Instructional Leadership Act credit is available for conference participants who get pre-approval from their school or district.

Preregistration

Feb. 14 is the deadline for preregistration to ticketed workshops and the full conference. Preregistration to the full conference is \$100; preregistration for only one day — either Friday or

Saturday — is \$60. The student conference fee is \$40. Most three-hour workshops are \$50 each.

After Feb. 14, fees increase to \$125 for full conference registration and \$75 for one-day registration. Student registration is \$50.

Twenty online professional development courses offered by the Kentucky Virtual High School will begin at KTLC and conclude April 25. Cost of each course is \$100.

The Exhibit Hall

The Exhibit Hall features several hundred vendors with products and educational programs of interest to educators. The display area will be open March 4 from noon to 4 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For complete conference information and online registration, go to www.kentuckytlc.org.

Leadership Letter

Compiled by
Joy Barr
jbarr@kde.state.ky.us

Planning retreats reenergize school teams

As 2003 was winding down, the Kentucky Department of Education's five achievement gap coordinators helped teams of principals, teachers, counselors and parents from 190 Kentucky schools get reenergized about their Comprehensive School Improvement Plans. The coordinators facilitated 11 Achievement Gap Planning Retreats, sponsored by the department, during November and December. The retreats helped the teams discover the importance of effective school improvement plans in advancing student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps.

Coordinators held the retreats to serve their constituents: Kay Brown – western Kentucky; Louise Byrd – northern Kentucky; Sue A. Davis – eastern Kentucky, and Gary L. Perkins – south central Kentucky. Michael Dailey works with schools in Jefferson and Fayette counties and the Kentucky School for the Blind.

At each retreat, school and district teams looked at student data from the 2003 state tests to find gaps in student achievement and low student performance areas. The teams then looked at the data and each of the nine standards listed in the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement document to discover how their schools must change in operation and structure to increase student achievement and eliminate gaps.

According to Pat Trotter, department liaison for the coordinators, the “ah-ha moment” for nearly every team came with the realization that changes must be made in the learning environment for all students to have opportunities to succeed. Teams also discovered needs for more focused, better school planning and targeted professional development for educators.

Teams requested resources from the Education Department's gap coordinators in many areas – from grant writing to instruction strategies for specific student populations, from help networking with successful schools to writing open-response questions. Coordinators are working with the department's educational partners to provide the assistance.

Follow-up visits this spring to several participating schools will help determine if teams were able to effectively apply what they learned at the retreats to each school's improvement efforts. Information gained during these visits will help guide future training sessions, Trotter said.

To learn more about Comprehensive School Improvement Planning and how it can affect student achievement and help eliminate achievement gaps, contact the gap coordinator for your school. Links to the coordinators can be accessed online at www.education.ky.gov, type “GAP” in the keyword/search box and click “Search.”

Financial aid available for counselor certification

The Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) and participating colleges offer financial help to educators interested in taking summer courses toward certification as school or mental health counselors. These colleges and universities will provide one tuition waiver per teacher: Eastern Kentucky University, Lindsey Wilson College, University of Louisville, Morehead State University, Murray State University, Western Kentucky University and Xavier University (Ohio).

The state counseling association will provide up to \$100 per participant for books. Students beginning work on a master's degree will get preference for aid.

Each applicant must submit a completed application, documentation of acceptance by the participating university and a letter of recommendation. The submission deadline is April 15.

For more information and an application, visit www.kyca.org and click on “KCA Summer Scholarships.”

Contact: Bill Braden, KCA executive director, 622 Timothy Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601, bradenkca@qx.net or phone (502) 223-5905.

Legislative information available online

With the Kentucky Legislature in full session, the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Legal and Legislative Services offers Web links to resources related to the legislative process. Educators may view:

- The 2004 Regular Session calendar
- How bills become law
- Membership of key legislative standing committees

On the Web: www.education.ky.gov, then type “legislative” in the keyword/search box and click on “Legal and Legislative Services.”

Learn communications strategies at seminar

The National School Public Relations Association's “NSPRA 2004” seminar, scheduled for July 11-14 at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville, has more than 70 skill-building topics on what's working and what's not in crucial school - community issues.

To learn more about the seminar and other NSPRA professional development resources, visit www.nspira.org or contact: nspira@nspira.org, (301) 519-0496.

NCLB hotline for superintendents

The U.S. Department of Education has a new hotline for superintendents: (888) 625-2787. This resource line offers information about all facets of the No Child Left Behind Act, including measuring school progress, supplemental educational services and public school choice options.



An advocate for lifelong learning

Thomas D. Clark, Kentucky's Historian Laureate for Life, prolific author, university professor and long-time education leader, has spent his life preserving Kentucky history and encouraging others to learn more about the state. Clark has been a passionate and vocal champion of public education. “I know of nothing that would improve conditions in Kentucky and give it future status more than a highly effective, efficient educational system,” he noted in his 1987 biography. A tree was planted at the Department of Libraries and Archives building in Frankfort, overlooking the Capitol, to mark Clark's 100th birthday.

Homeland Security guidelines for schools

Agencies across the nation, including the Kentucky Center for School Safety and the American Red Cross, are working with the federal government to ensure that Americans remain safe and secure. The Homeland Security Advisory System keeps citizens informed about safety and security issues.

The Red Cross has created specific lists of recommendations concerning the Homeland Security Advisory System to help individuals, families, schools, businesses and communities better understand how they can be prepared for emergencies and heightened alert status.

Visit www.kysafeschools.org/clear/securityadv.html to print the list of recommendations for school safety and security.

Community/technical colleges target shortages

Some of Kentucky's community and technical colleges are providing a new program aimed at increasing the numbers of teachers and classroom assistants. A two-year degree program in education is designed to allow students to transfer to four-year education programs at Kentucky universities. The program is designed to help reduce teacher shortages in fields such as special education and mathematics.

The program also will prepare classroom instructional aides for a test in reading, writing and mathematics that they must pass to meet the federal No Child

Left Behind Act requirements. The two-year degree will reflect more than 60 hours of coursework that can be transferred into baccalaureate programs at every public university and many private colleges and universities throughout the state.

New associate degree programs are being implemented in the Gateway, Hazard, Hopkinsville, Elizabethtown, Jefferson, Owensboro and Somerset community colleges. Central Community College now offers the paraeducator certificate, and other KCTCS colleges are planning to offer the degree program.

Contact: Carolyn O'Daniel at (859) 246-3142 or by e-mail at Carolyn.O'Daniel@kctcs.edu

Principals: Attend KTLC Free

When five or more people from one school preregister for the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC), March 4-6 in Louisville, the conference registration fee (a \$100 value) will be waived for a principal or assistant principal.

Take advantage of this offer by submitting the registration as a group, via mail or fax only (not online) with one payment or purchase order and attach the business card of the principal or assistant principal who is to receive the waived registration.

For more information about the conference, visit www.kentuckytlc.org or see story on Page 1.



Photo by Rick McComb

Helmwood Elementary student Victoria Reynolds adds color to her rendering of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" in teacher Angie Minutelli's class.

By Cathy Lindsey
clindsey@kde.state.ky.us

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. However, the faculty at Helmwood Heights Elementary is hoping a picture will inspire a thousand words in their promising young writers. The Helmwood Art Gallery recently opened in this Elizabethtown school as a different approach to inspire writing activities for all students.

"Teachers are most excited about the opportunity to raise the bar of cultural awareness and promote the appreciation of the fine arts," said Martha York, resource specialist for Elizabethtown Independent Schools.

The central hall in the school has been transformed into an art gallery. Elizabethtown High School graduate Katie Hall painted a mural in the hall to help define the exhibit space.

An information sheet that discusses the artist, the painting's shapes, lines, colors, textures and colors, the movement in the art and the focal points in the painting accompanies each piece of art. The intention is to help students recognize that art is all around them, York explained.

Shelves and display cases

exhibit hands-on interactive pieces of art that can be manipulated by curious hands.

Featured works in the art gallery change throughout the school year. Each exhibit teaches students a new concept.

The premiere exhibit featured famous reproductions that illustrate the elements of visual art – line, shape, color, texture and space. One display introduced portrait painting and drawing. Other showings have highlighted art forms from Native American and West African cultures that are included in the elementary core content.

Teachers at Helmwood are considering future exhibits that offer a presentation of Appalachian culture, reproductions of art that express pieces of literature and a display of local artists' work. Plans also include an exhibit of artwork by the school's exceptional students.

Prior to each new exhibit, teachers receive resource materials to use in their classrooms. "We provide a teaching packet with writing prompts, interactive Web sites and other activities teachers can take to class," York said.

Mary Hall, a P3-P4 teacher, uses the gallery to have students write "snapshots" of the

artwork. As a game, each of her students writes a description of one piece of art on display and others in the class guess which piece is being described.

According to York and Hall, many Helmwood students are being inspired by the exhibits to learn more about art. York said students are increasingly checking out biographies of artists from the school library because the youngsters have seen the artists' work in the gallery.

The art gallery also is allowing opportunities for students to share. Classes are discussing the art, the color, movement and mood of each piece. They are discussing how the mood would have changed if different colors had been used.

Students are giving a voice to the art. For example, some

wrote imaginary dialogue for the couple featured in "American Gothic" by Grant Wood.

During the exhibit featuring portraits, art teacher Jane Williams' students followed Pablo Picasso's journey from realism to the abstract and created their own abstract portraits.

"You see those budding artists in your classroom, and it's neat to see them have this experience," Hall said.

"We are finding teachers going in a lot of different directions," York said. "This experience offers a holistic approach to cultural awareness with a curriculum connection."

By presenting content from the high school arts and humanities curriculum, the teachers are building a base of knowledge for the students to use as a

frame of reference for what they are going to see later in their school careers.

"These students are much more likely to have a better grasp on terminology and elements of art," she explained.

The art gallery is the latest strategy being used by Helmwood teachers to increase student arts and humanities achievement. Last year, school scores in this content area increased 20 points. Teachers expect the gallery will help build on recent successes, York said.

"There's so much you want them to be exposed to, you have to grab every teaching opportunity you can," York said. "The possibilities are limitless."

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